



Permanent Mission of Japan
to the United Nations



Side Event on the Margins of the Ministerial Roundtable on Central Sahel

co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme

Regenerating Central Sahel: Putting the Nexus to Action

13 October 2020, from 9:30 – 11.00 am New York (15:30 - 17.00 CET)

Concept Note

Background

Over the past decade, the Central Sahel region, comprising of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, has become the epicentre of violent conflicts in the Sahel, characterized by unprecedented levels of insecurity and a political, humanitarian and development crises that threaten the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2020 alone, over 10,000 civilians have been killed in the Central Sahel region¹, and insecurity and forced displacement are destroying the social fabric of communities and disrupting basic social services and governance. Food insecurity and human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, are on a sharp rise. The current political instability in Mali, following the coup d'état of August 18, 2020, may further increase the fragility of Mali and affect the entire Central Sahel region.

All this is unfolding in a region at the bottom of global human development indices with close to half of the population experiencing severe multidimensional poverty². Severe vulnerabilities are deepening due to the convergence of poverty, social exclusion, rapid population growth, food insecurity, internal displacement, weak governance, violent extremism and conflict. In addition, climate change is severely impacting communities and exacerbating conflict dynamics by heightened competition over increasingly scarce natural resources, putting a strain on centuries-old delicate relationships between farmers and herders. Concerted action is urgently required to curb the ongoing violence and prevent further spill-over of insecurity and its impact on vulnerable communities, potentially into Togo, Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and beyond.

COVID-19 has worsened an already precarious situation and is stretching already weak systems and structures. Estimations show that national lockdowns, workplace closures and other mitigation strategies implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic immediately pushed about 6 million into extreme poverty³, further eroding the resilience of communities.

As humanitarian needs increase across the three countries⁴, it is vital to address the causes of protracted insecurity and low human development. Highly fragile contexts such as large parts of the Central Sahel region require an integrated area-based approach which puts vulnerable communities firmly at the center of the action and where different actors come together to address basic needs in the areas of protection, social services and livelihood. This in turn requires a shared contextual understanding, effective coordination, sequencing of interventions, and transparent and collaborative approaches, i.e. a nexus approach. Focusing at the local level and tangible challenges which all

¹ ACLED data for 1 Jan to 26 Sept 2020: total number of fatalities in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger

² [UNDP Human Development Report 2019](#)

³ [UNDP and UNWOMEN analysis on impact of COVID-19 on Africa](#)

⁴ OCHA Central Sahel Conference

stakeholders have an interest in resolving usually offer more favorable conditions for successfully applying the Humanitarian – Development – Peace (HDP) nexus in a pragmatic manner.

For a region that is culturally borderless and where the central state has either never been present or had to leave because of insecurity, traditional state-centric approaches are ineffective in the short run. Instead, sub-national authorities and local communities must be empowered socially, economically and politically to sustainably address the most vulnerable populations. Transformative programs targeting what is sometimes referred to as ‘ungoverned spaces’, focusing on rural communities and the predominantly youthful population, may cause a paradigm shift over time if combined with longer term reform processes of the state and sub-national capacity.

Digital solutions and other innovative approaches - such as the ASSA application developed in Mali by UNDP and its partner the Tuwindi Fondation for prevention against COVID 19 - have gained prominence since the advent of COVID-19 and proven to be useful tools in data collection, planning, awareness raising and communication. The Sahel entrepreneurship programme with the Tony Elumelu Foundation funded start up projects for thousands of vulnerable youth. These experiences can be further harnessed to support local development, social cohesion and governance but require better alignment of humanitarian, development and peace actors behind collective outcomes, under the overall leadership of national governments and local authorities. Partnership with communities, private sector, and young people, including women, will protect development gains and support sustainable recovery.

In the lead-up to the Ministerial Roundtable on the Central Sahel on 20 October 2020, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and UNDP are co-organizing a side-event to present and discuss pathways for an effective nexus approach for sustainable recovery. The meeting will provide an opportunity to:

- Present concrete examples of local approaches being applied by the UNDP and other actors including the civil society, regional and national actors to support recovery and address the root causes of the crises in Central Sahel;
- Discuss the effectiveness of existing humanitarian-development-peace nexus mechanisms in Central Sahel and how they can be replicated / scaled up;
- Address the criticality of innovative partnerships and private sector engagement in addressing the multi-dimensional crisis of the Central Sahel;
- Reflect on the coordination, sequencing and complementarity of humanitarian, development and peace interventions, including funding, as part of the UN’s crisis response in the region.

General information related to the side event

- The Side Event (virtual) will bring together representatives from affected governments, civil society actors, the UN and international humanitarian and development organizations, multilateral financing institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors. The purpose will be to review innovative approaches that cut across humanitarian action, development cooperation and peace efforts, while paying special attention to the impact and consequences of COVID-19.
- Panelist will be asked to speak for 3 - 5 minutes.
- Participants will be allowed to ask questions to the panellists and to make succinct and brief statements in the meeting.
- A summary document will be prepared at the conclusion of the event, identifying key action points and opportunities for follow-up.

Please Register for the Side Event using this link: <https://bit.ly/3d5HYru>

For further Information Please contact Ms. Jane Yeboah, by email, jane.o.yeboah@undp.org and Ms. Camilla Bengtsson, by email, camilla.bengtsson@undp.org

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Nations Development Programme**

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Working language is French and English, with translation provided

Agenda

Session 1: Opening remarks – (3 minutes each):

Moderator: Ms. Diana Ofwona, UNDP Resident Representative in Niger

- **H. E. Ambassador Tetsuya Kimura**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations,
- **H. E. Ambassador Rolf Holmboe**, Embassy of Denmark, Mali
- **Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa**, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa
- **Mr. Martial Wilfried Bassole**, Director General, Ministry of Economic and Territorial Development, Burkina Faso
- **Mr. Bakary Bengali**, Mopti Regional Director of Social, Economic and Solidarity Development, Mali
- **Mr. ISSA Lamine**, Governor of Diffa, Niger

Session II: Moderated Panel discussion: (5 minutes each)

Moderator: Dr. Joy Kategekwa, Senior Advisor to the UNDP Director for Africa

- **Mr. Samba Bathily**, Founder/CEO ADS Group, and CEO, Solektra
 - **Ms. Ifeyinwa Ugochukwu**, CEO, Tony Elumelu Foundation
 - **Mr. Tidiani Togola**, Founder/CEO, Tuwindi Foundation, Mali
 - **Mr. Ousmane Mahamadou**, Youth Leader, Niger
- Interventions from participants / audience

Closing Remarks:

- **Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa**, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa